

## **The Adventures of El & M by PoisonInTheWine**

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**Summary:** Set after "The Anniversary": Mike and Eleven's relationship was nothing less than perfection, and Hawkins finally seemed to be a normal town again. But was it really?

## 1. Chapter 1: The Lake

So I wrote a oneshot called The Anniversary, but then I decided that it should become an actual story hours after publishing it. I love these little characters so much, a oneshot was not enough for me. This takes place after the oneshot, so if you'd like to go take a peek at that.

11/3/17

The Adventures of El & M

Summer, 1985

*She was in Hawkins Lab again, stuck in the room she most dreaded being in.*

*"Papa is coming to help you, everything will be over soon", she heard him whisper.*

*No! She wanted to scream, but she couldn't seem to open her mouth. The figure of Dr. Brenner grew closer and closer, the sterile smell of the lab filled her nose. It burned. It only took the turn of her head to end his life, so why didn't she?*

*Her heart pounded as his hand crept closer and closer to her face,*

*"Elev-"*

Eleven was suddenly jolted awake by someone furiously shaking her shoulder.

"El? Are you all right?" Hopper asked worriedly. She slowly sat up and looked around, it was still dark out. Hooper loomed above her, half-asleep and unshaven.

"Fine." she replied, it was only dream. Brenner had been dead for a long time.

Hopper's eyes narrowed ever so slightly, as if he detected the lie.

"I'm *fine*, promise." she insisted, a late night conversation about her

nightmares was not what she wanted right now.

Hopper sighed and ran a hand through his disheveled hair. He was not in the mood to argue, and neither was she. "Okay I guess, go back to sleep. 'Night." he said, ruffling her hair. She smiled at him as he left the room and quietly shut the door.

As soon as she heard Hopper's door close, she jumped from the bed and turned on the television. A Coca-Cola commercial begun to play, but she wasn't planning to watch any kind of show. She needed to see *him*.

The static filled her ears as she tied the black blindfold around her eyes. Breathing in, she let herself enter the darkness.

xXx

It only took two minutes to find Mike, she had become so attuned to him over the months- finding him was easier than breathing. He was sleeping, the blue sheets were a crumpled mess around his body, and one of his arms dangled from the bed. She laughed quietly to herself at the sight and kneeled by his bedside.

She reached out her hand and softly ran it down his cheek. She couldn't feel him, nor could he feel her- but the gesture was comforting nonetheless. Mike let out a tiny snore, and Eleven suppressed another giggle.

She did this whenever she had a nightmare which recently had become more frequent than she would have preferred. It was August now, summer was ending and school was approaching. Mike and her other friends were going to attend their first year of "high school". She wanted to go too, but Hopper would have none of it. It would draw too much attention, and she wasn't stupid.

Part of her knew Hopper was right, but looking down at Mike reminded her of how much she is missing being a regular child. Hopper always would insist that being regular is "bullshit", but she disagreed.

Mike lived a normal life, while hers was sheltered. Hopper tried his

best to homeschool her when he could. She was a fast learner, trying to absorb as much information as possible. She wanted to be level with the others. Her handwriting was less than average, but her English had greatly improved since she first escaped Hawkins Lab in '83. Mike also taught her about science and history. She never really understood most of it, but she listened anyways because it meant something to him- and if it meant something to him, then it meant something to her too.

She looked once more at his sleeping form before drawing herself away from the scene, back into her room at the cabin. A familiar feeling of loneliness crept into her as she gripped the stuffed lion to her chest.

Loneliness was something she felt often. It went away when Mike was with her, because when he was with her she would forget about everything. He made her feel like the most important person in the world.

But when Mike wasn't with her, and Hopper was asleep, she felt the emptiness. It made her think of the lab, being isolated from society. She was alone for weeks in the woods after she killed the monster, and that loneliness just never seemed to completely go away.

There was only one person who understood her loneliness, and that was Eight- her sister. They shared the lab, they both went through the torture and the manipulation, but she too was gone. Hawkins lab remains closed, and Eight remains lost. Eleven wondered if she'd ever meet her again.

She didn't notice when the tears started to fall down her cheeks until her eyes began to sting.

xXx

Mike Wheeler jumped out of his bed the moment his alarm went off. Dressing quickly, he ran downstairs to grab breakfast, and then it was time to head over to El's cabin. He wanted to take Eleven to the lake again. It was the last day of summer, and Mike wanted to make it count.

"You're eager to leave." his mother said as he stuffed scrambled eggs into his mouth. He noticed that Nancy was nowhere to be found.

"Last day of summer."

His mother shrugged and went over to help Holly eat her breakfast. Mike finished his and practically threw the plate into the sink as he raced out of the door. The bike to the cabin is a long one, but Mike never complained.

After hiking through the woods with the bike, he finally reached the cabin. He raised his hand and gave the secret knock that Hopper taught him. He heard the locks on the door slowly unlocking, and the door flew open.

Mike entered, scanning the room for El. He found her pouring syrup on her waffles in the kitchen. She turned around and bounced over to him, kissing his cheek.

"Hey." he said, looking down and giving her a warm smile that made the butterflies in her stomach soar. *Would It ever stop being like this?* She wondered, *I hope not.*

"What are we doing today?" she asked him, taking a bite out of her waffle.

"I thought we could go swimming." he said nonchalantly. Eleven had never been swimming. She had been in bathtubs, but never in deep water. Anxiety crept into her brain about the idea.

Mike seemed to notice her apprehension, "Or if you don't want to swim we can go somewhere else and have fun." he added.

She looked up at him and shook her head. If she was with Mike, she would be all right; she trusted him.

"We'll swim." she decided.

An hour later they reached the lake, after finding a tracking down a bathing suit for El. It was a hot pink one piece with butterflies on it, courtesy of Nancy Wheeler. Eleven eyed the lake with hesitation, but Mike was oblivious as he jumped headfirst into the water and popped

his head up seconds later.

He waved his hand at her, "Come in, the water's warm."

She bit down on her lip and slowly put one foot in the water, grabbing Mike's outstretched hand. He lead her deeper and deeper into the water until they stood on their toes to avoid going under.

"It's nice." she admitted, enjoying the warm water on her skin.

"Here, I'll show you how to float." Mike said, letting go of her hand. She gasped in surprise as he grabbed her legs and pushed her up so that her body was floating upwards in the water.

"Just relax your arms and legs." he added, so she did.

"Like this?"

"Yeah, good job. Just don't move or you'll go under."

She nodded her head slowly, and stared up at the sky. It was a bright and cloudless summer day. She listened to the birds and the bugs, and faintly she could hear the distant screams of children as they enjoyed their last day of freedom before the school year began.

Mike watched Eleven with a certain look of wonder in his eyes. It seemed impossible that she was a real person, and she was here with him. She turned her head over to him, creating tiny ripples in the water with the small movement.

"Mike?" she asked.

"Yeah?"

"Can you teach me how to swim?"

He smiled, "It's easy, just kick your legs and move your arms in a circular motion. Like this." he said, swimming away from her. She stood back up on her toes and slowly moved her arms. She kicked off with her feet, and managed to doggy paddle over to Mike.

"This is hard." she huffed, a small frown forming between her

eyebrows.

"You'll get used to it, just have to swim more." he assured her, then he playfully splashed a little bit of water at her. She jerked her head back in surprise, eyes narrowing. Mike threw his hands up in mock innocence and swam further away from her.

Eleven flicked her hand at him and sent a wave in his direction. Mike let out a small scream and threw himself under the water to avoid the wave. When he resurfaced, El was furiously giggling.

"Not funny." he said, scowling.

She laughed again, "Funny." she replied, playfully sticking out her tongue.

Mike shook his head and swam away. El turned to follow him, but lost her footing as the lake grew deep and went under the water.

And just like that, she wasn't at the lake anymore.

She was in the bathtub, with Papa and the scientists watching her as the tube closed, surrounding her in complete darkness. Then, she was in the upside down with it. She saw the slime and blood on its skin as it tore open a dead body.

*It isn't real, she told herself, swim away.*

But she couldn't swim away, because it felt like something was grabbing her foot, dragging her deeper and deeper into the lake. She kicked her legs and flailed her arms around. Her mouth opened to scream, and water rushed in. Her throat burned as the air escaped her lungs. Where was Mike?

There was a word for this, something she had heard from the television. Hopper had told her a little boy had died from this two months ago, it had been a tragic accident.

*Drowning.*

## 2. A Glass of Red & A Pack of Cigs

Chapter Two: A Glass of Red & A Pack of Cigs

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Eleven opened her eyes to a world of darkness, water pooling beneath her feet.

"Mike?" she called out, her voice echoing into the void. She heard another voice, barely audible in the dark.

*"Eleven."*

It sounded masculine, and so familiar to her. She strained to hear, hoping for the voice to speak again. When it did not, she called out again. Nothing.

This time, she heard running water. It progressively grew louder until she felt it rush in to her ears and into her mouth.

*Drowning.*

Gaspings, she was now underwater. A hand was reaching out, Mike's hand. Eleven grabbed it and felt her body being violently pulled out of the water.

She coughed and spat water as she surfaced, noticing the horrible burn in her lungs and in her throat.

"El? Are you okay?" Mike asked her, pulling her closer to the shore until they were out of the water and the heat of the sun warmed her back.

She couldn't talk just yet, so she shook her head and coughed.

Mike's eyes were glossy as he gingerly wiped the hair out of her face, "I'm so sorry, I should've stayed by you. I thought that you—" he sniffed and wiped his eyes, "-you were dead. You went under and didn't come back up. So I dove under, and I couldn't find you at first. I'm so sorry."

Eleven threw her arms around him and shook her head, "Not your fault." she whispered.

His body trembled as he tightly hugged her, water droplets from his hair running down her back.

He pulled away and stared at her, "What happened down there?" he asked quietly.

She hesitated for a moment, because she did not know herself. Whatever had grabbed her leg was gone, and so was the voice that she had heard.

"It was dark, and there was this voice. I wasn't underwater, I was in the void." she began, swallowing the knot in her throat. "It said my name, and then I was back underwater."

Mike frowned at her, "That's impossible, you couldn't have been there and not underwater at the same time."

Eleven knew he was right, but it didn't make any sense to her. When she entered the void, she was still physically in the present. It was all in her mind, so why couldn't she feel herself in the water? Nothing about it made sense.

"I don't know." she whispered.

Mike pulled her in for another hug, but this time he buried his face in her neck and wrapped his arms all the way around her shaking torso. It was the kind of embrace that gave her the reassurance and safety she so desperately needed.

"You'll be okay." Mike muttered into her hair, sending tiny little shivers down her spin as his warm breath tickled her skin.

Eleven nodded, but she did not feel like it was. Something *grabbed* her leg, she heard a voice in the void. It wasn't okay at all.

xXx

Jim Hopper sat at his desk with a dead cigarette bud between his fingers. He rubbed his hand across his forehead, silently cursing the

heat. Unfortunately, the office had poor air- Hopper was stuck in the heat with quite literally nothing to do.

He stared at the phone, wondering if he should call Eleven to make sure she was safe. It had been five months since the gate, and he was still on high alert. He told Owens that he'd keep the girl under the radar for another year, but Eleven would have none of it.

"I'm sick of hiding, nobody will notice me if it's dark out." she had told him earlier in the summer. They had been arguing all day about going out with her friends, so Hopper had eventually caved in and let her go out- with the exception that he would park his car right outside of the Wheeler's house.

She started slowly gaining her freedom, every other day she would beg him to go out, and he would oblique. It was difficult saying no to a girl with psychokinetic abilities and a very harsh temper. He knew she was at the lake with Mike, who he remained hesitant on. He wasn't blind, he saw the bond the two shared, but he was afraid that Eleven was growing up too fast with him.

The phone rang, he quickly dashed out of his chair- thinking it might be Eleven.

"Chief Jim Hopper." he answered.

Joyce Byers voice sounded into the phone as she greeted him, "Hop, are we still on for lunch?" she asked.

Hopper rubbed his forehead again, he had completely forgotten all about his plans with Joyce. "Yeah, I'll be there. Your place?" he said, cringing at his forgetfulness.

"My place, I hope you're up for Italian." she replied.

He smiled, even though she couldn't see it. "I'll be there in a few."

The line ended and Hopper set the phone back onto the wall. He grabbed his keys and a package of Camels, heading out of the office.

The Byers home looked as normal as ever as Hopper pulled into the gravel driveway. The house stood as a symbol of hope for the

residents of Hawkins, it had been torn apart, and attacked- along with missing windows, walls, and a dead Demogorgon in the refrigerator. Hopper fixed the windows and the walls, cleaned out the shed, and even disposed of the Demogorgon (after fighting with a very disgruntled Dustin, who wanted to use the creature as a scientific breakthrough).

He knocked on the door, using the same knock he used with Eleven. In morse code, it meant *us*; out of habit he used it with the Byers. He heard the multiple locks and chains on the door undo, and the door opened, greeting Hopper to a very presentable looking Joyce Byers.

She smiled and wrapped her arms around him, something that they did often now.

"I made spaghetti and meatballs, Will helped with the garlic bread." she said as they entered the home.

Hopper inhaled the scent of garlic and herbs as he sat at the small wooden table, where Joyce had arranged two plates and a bottle of red wine.

He raised an eyebrow at the wine, "Where'd you find this?" he asked.

Joyce shrugged, pouring two glasses. "Grocery store, I'm not much of a wine drinker but I thought it would go with the food."

He continued to eye her, noticing that her hair wasn't a mess of tangles. It was smoothed down and slightly curly, she even wore a faint pink lipstick and blush with a white blouse.

"You look nice today." he said nonchalantly. She looked at him and smiled, ducking her head and busying herself with serving the pasta.

"You're not so bad yourself, Chief looks good on you." she replied, Hopper laughed. He practically lived in his uniform nowadays.

They ate together in a comfortable silence, with the radio from Will's room quietly playing an Olivia Newton John song. This was their routine every week. When Hopper wasn't working or with Eleven, he was at the Byer's home, slowly helping Joyce and the boys get back to normal.

"How's Radioshack been lately?" Hopper asked, after sipping his wine.

Joyce shrugged, "It's been fine really. John's been teaching me as much as possible, and I'll be getting a bonus for the holidays." She smiled, "Will wants the newest technology, I might be able to get it for him this year."

Hopper grinned, but he did not miss the sad look in her eyes when she talked about the Shack. Initially, he was shocked when she quit her job at the convenience store after a decade of working there and was hired at Radioshack. She did it for *him*, for Bob. Hawkins barely noticed his disappearance, and ignored his death- so she did everything in her power to commemorate him. Even if it meant working at Radioshack with no technological background.

Bob's death was covered up, among the rest of the lives lost at Hawkins Lab. A toxic gas leak- the news had called it- that killed over half of the Hawkins Lab staff before it's closing. He attended the funeral for him, and held Joyce as she cried into his uniform.

He had always been jealous of Bob, no matter how much he denied it to himself. Joyce had adored him, and for months she was devastated over his death. Now, he saw the brief flash of pain in her eyes, but it dissipated as soon as it surfaced.

They grew closer over the months, she kept him sane and he kept her pain away. To her, Hopper was a close friend, and nothing more. It couldn't be anything *but* friendship, because their pain they shared was too much. Joyce could not handle a new relationship, and he was too afraid of one. So, they kept their routine simple- never crossing any boundaries and never saying anything that they shouldn't.

"How's El?" she asked him.

"She's at the lake with Mike today."

Joyce eyed him humorously, "You don't like it." she said matter-of-factly.

Hopper shrugged, "She thinks she's invincible. It's still too early to be going out into the public, but she insists that she's fine."

"Jim," she began. "I'm not talking about Eleven going out, I'm talking about her with Mike."

Hopper sighed and leaned back in his chair, "I like the kid, it's just- I don't know." he said, running his hands through his hair in frustration.

Joyce gave him a knowing look that only a parent could understand, "All dads hate when their daughters date boys."

Hopper glared at her, "It's not that, and I'm not her- well I know that's what the damn birth certificate says but I'm not good enough to be that just yet."

Joyce reached across the table and grabbed his hand, rubbing her thumb across his in reassurance. "Jim, I know she isn't yours, but you are a good man. She looks up to you, and you want to protect her. I understand." She said, with such a sincere look in her eyes that Hopper couldn't doubt that every word she spoke was the truth.

"I just don't want her to get hurt." he whispered, as if admitting it aloud was dangerous.

"He won't hurt her. He adores her, just like you do. She's a very special girl." Joyce replied, "I always worry about Will and Jonathon, but sometimes we just have to trust that the kids have a good head on their shoulders."

Hopper nodded, of course she was right. Joyce Byers had gone through hell and back for her children, she knew the devastation of losing a child, and she knew the strong urge to protect them from everything bad in the world. He loved Eleven like his own daughter, they were the best of friends. But Eleven was attached to Mike, and Hopper was too attached to Eleven to accept their relationship just yet.

He pulled out the pack of Camels and lit one, handing it to Joyce, "Thank you." he told her. She smiled at him, then inhaled the

cigarette- blowing out a large puff of smoke that sent them both into a coughing fit.

xXx

Mike and Eleven were back at the cabin, laying on the bed and listening to the radio.

"Do you think I will go to high school?" Eleven asked him.

Mike paused, uncertain. He did not know the answer himself, but he tried to remain optimistic for her sake. "Maybe, you can talk to Hopper about it."

El looked disappointed, "I have. He always says no."

Mike bumped his shoulder against hers, "You'll go one day. Don't worry about it, school isn't that much fun."

"But I want to learn what you learn, and we could spend more time together. I barely see Will, Dustin, or Lucas." she said, sighing in frustration. She rolled onto her back and stared at the ceiling as she levitated a pencil in midair.

Mike watched her as she focused on the pencil in amusement, "What about Max?" he asked.

She turned and narrowed her eyes at him, dropping the pencil to the floor. "I don't like Max."

He laughed at her stubbornness, "It's been five months El, when are you going to give her a chance?"

El shrugged, "I was here first."

Mike laughed again, but said nothing more. Ever since the gate had been closed, El and Max have maintained a steady distance away from each other. Mike had tried multiple times to get El and Max together, but El always refused. *Always holds a grudge.* He thought to himself in amusement.

Seeing that El still held a frown on her face, he attempted to change

the subject. "Do you want to do some more work?" he asked her.

El smiled and jumped off of the bed to grab her stack of textbooks that Mike had given her from his previous classes. She had every subject that she read every evening, sometimes with Hopper, but mostly with Mike. He loved to talk about science and history, and she gladly listened.

Mike picked out an American history book and held it up. "How about this one?" he said. El nodded and together they leaned against the bed and opened the book to an overview of WWII. El leaned her head on Mike's shoulder and followed along as he read to her about the battles and dictators during the decade.

Eleven never quite understood why Dr. Brenner had made her seek out the foreign man in the void until recently in her reading of the Red Scare. When she told Mike, he had theorized that they were planning to use her as a weapon against the Russians. It angered her that she was viewed as a weapon instead of a human being, adding to her hate for Dr. Brenner.

She never came to understand the concept of war. Mike tried to explain to her that it was mostly for political reasons (which she never really understood either), but she couldn't understand how so many people would die for a cause that didn't really make any sense.

"If you think about it," he had said to her once, "we were at war with the Mind Flayer. He had his soldiers and we had ours."

She hated the word, and she hated learning about it. But this was common education, and if she wanted to be normal like the other kids, she needed to learn about the bad things.

Dr. Brenner had limited her education in the lab. She was taught basic math and reading. She barely wrote, Brenner had stopped letting her draw after she turned 10. Her knowledge of anything was extremely limited, which is what he wanted. The scientists wanted her to be ignorant of everything- a mindless soldier in their army. She did what she was told, always afraid to disobey; to be punished.

She felt herself getting tired as Mike read on. She tried to be engaged

to what he was teaching her about, but soon she felt her eyes flutter closed and sleep overtake her. When Mike noticed that she was sleeping on his shoulder, he quietly shut the textbook and carefully shifted so he could lay her on the pillow.

As he began to move away, she opened her eyes and grabbed his hand. "Mike?" she asked quietly.

"Yeah?"

"Will you come visit me tomorrow after school? So you can tell me about it?"

Mike smiled, feeling honored that she wanted to hear about his first day of high school. "Of course. I'll be here at 3:15."

El returned the smile, and let go of his hand as she snuggled into her covers, "Goodnight Mike." she whispered before she drifted off back to sleep.

Mike leaned down and planted a kiss at the top of her head, then pulled up the covers so she wouldn't wake up cold in the morning.

He jumped when he heard the familiar knock of Hopper at the front door. Quickly closing El's door after one final, longing glance at her sleeping form, he dashed to the front door to let Hopper in. He opened the door, looking up as Hopper towered above him.

"Mike," Hopper said with a bit of a surprised tone, "I thought you would have gone home by now, it's getting dark outside."

Mike shrugged, "El and I didn't really notice what time it was."

Hopper stepped in and shut the door behind them, locking it in the process. He took off his hat and slumped into the couch. "Well did you have fun?"

Mike nodded, shifting uncomfortably under the chief's scrutinizing stare. "We did, thank you for letting her go out."

Hopper nodded, "You should get going now, it is a school night."

Mike looked at the clock and silently cursed himself for staying so late, when he promised his mom that he would be home in time for dinner. He grabbed his damp shoes and quickly slid them on.

"Hey kid?" Hopper called as Mike was halfway through the door.

"Yeah Hopper?"

Hopper looked conflicted for a moment, but shook it off. "Thank you, for always keeping an eye out for her." he said.

Mike smiled, "Always. Have a good night chief!" he called as he shut the door. Grabbing his bike from the porch, he began the long ride back to his house.

xXx

I really meant to get this up on 11/11 (get it? 😊) but now it is about 12:37 in the morning and therefore it is now 11/12. Sorry for any disappointment I could have inflicted, but feel free to favorite/follow/review this anyways lol! Chapters will be longer I am just tired and would like to get a chapter up before the end of the week. See you soon! :)

Thank you to all of my kind reviews on the first chapter, these really motivate me to keep writing!

**nubbynubbster**

**XxAngelWithoutWingsxX**

**DaisytheDoodleDog**

& everyone else on the oneshot too! You guys gave it a lot of love in so little time, I was not expecting it to be as well liked as it was! Thank you, Mileven loves you.